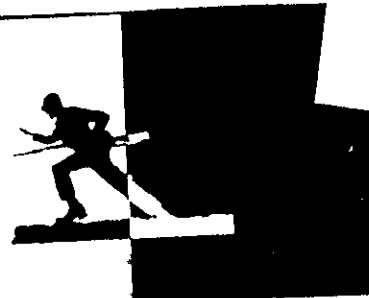


# INFANTRY LETTERS



## AUFTRAGSTAKTIK

Lieutenant Colonel John L. Silva, in "Auftragstaktik: Its Origin and Development" (INFANTRY, September-October 1989, pages 6-9), has performed a signal service for INFANTRY readers and for the Army in general. By clearly defining *auftragstaktik* and tracing its evolution in the German army, he leads us to understand how the Germans created an atmosphere for training and warfighting in which mission orders and decentralized execution worked synergistically to achieve outstanding results.

This article is particularly apt today for several reasons. As Colonel Silva points out, AirLand Battle doctrine makes much of mission orders and mission-oriented command. Moreover, we expect operations on future battlefields to proceed at continuous high tempo with a certain compartmentalization of effort because of the resulting fluid tactical environment. Such an environment places a premium on the disciplined, focused actions of leaders at squad, platoon, and company levels, often operating in isolation from higher headquarters command, control, communications, and intelligence.

The independent actions of these small unit leaders, directed toward achieving their commander's intent, will be absolutely crucial to our success. Inculcating in these leaders the habit of independent action and an understanding that failure to act is wrong is what we seek, and it is very clearly along the lines of *auftragstaktik* as Colonel Silva describes it.

At present, however, neither FM 100-5, Operations; FM 22-102, Soldier Team Development; nor FM 25-100, Training the Force, spells out with any clarity or precision how we are to "train as we will fight" in this critical respect.

How, indeed, do we, as a Total Army, deliberately create an environment in

which we meet the Army Chief of Staff's challenge to develop confident, competent leaders—leaders who will experiment and seek better ways of accomplishing the mission, as a matter of course, especially in the absence of supervision or further instructions from higher headquarters? I submit that Colonel Silva has largely answered that question for us.

If we are to build the self-confidence that independent action requires and on which AirLand Battle is based, we really have to give junior leaders the freedom to learn from their mistakes without having their careers destroyed. If we truly accept and institutionalize the idea that "everything short of war is training," we must make every well-intentioned action by those leaders a learning experience for them—not a career-threatening one—and reinforce the learning through creative coaching. We need, as a corollary, to inculcate the precept that a failure to act is wrong, again, in line with the ethos described in the article.

I further submit that such an environment, actively and formally fostered Army-wide, will produce the kind of leaders at all levels that the Chief of Staff seeks and knows we must have to win. Maybe we won't be pretty, but we'll be a great deal more effective if we give our soldiers the environment and structure they need to capitalize on their capabilities.

JAMES L. YARRISON  
LTC, Virginia Army National Guard  
Springfield, Virginia

## NCO WARFIGHTING CONFERENCES

While I was a rifle company commander, I scanned the battle roster and realized that a key element of experience

was missing from the ranks—combat veterans.

As the Vietnam conflict moves farther into history, the experience of combat veterans that I was fortunate enough to draw from as a young lieutenant no longer (or only rarely) exists now at platoon level. The young leaders in my company, though competent, could not honestly answer the questions the soldiers asked them about combat.

To verify my own training and to justify the adage "Train in peace as you fight in war," I actively sought out respected war veterans to fill in the gaps. Focusing on the battle analysis as a way to execute the training, I invited them to participate in quarterly NCO warfighting conferences.

The concept of the warfighting conference was not new; I had been introduced to it in a class at the Infantry School. I was impressed by the program and was convinced it was a sound idea that would work at company level.

Using the multi-echelon approach to training, I tasked out key battles to my platoon leaders for them to analyze as part of our officer professional development program. The battles were chosen for their significance in history and for the way they related to the unit's history or its mission essential tasks.

The Battle of the Bulge, Anzio, Market Garden, Inchon, Chosin, and Junction City were just a few of the analyses we conducted and learned from in these conferences.

Finding the combat veterans proved easy; I simply asked for volunteers through the local Veterans Association. The veterans were chosen for the key NCO leadership positions they held at the time of the battle under discussion—squad leader, platoon sergeant, and the like. (I chose not to use officers because I wanted the theme of the conferences to be NCO leadership in combat and the

way that leadership affected and motivated young infantry soldiers.)

During a typical conference, the platoon leaders first gave a battle analysis of the tactical operations, complete with **terrain board, maps, and overlays**. This was followed by personal remarks from the visiting veterans to whet the soldiers' appetites. **Then the soldiers were given an opportunity to ask the combat veterans questions on the lessons learned.**

The soldiers became totally immersed in the realities of combat and its accompanying hardships. They heard from seasoned veterans that they must train hard and work as a team, and that NCOs must lead to survive. There was no doubt in my mind that afterwards the young soldiers, when their leaders told them to ~~low crawl or to run~~ that extra mile in training, would remember the words of the veterans, "Keep your head down or die," or "Physical fitness and intestinal fortitude won the fight."

Such conferences require very little logistical support to be successful; they require only the initiative and planning of a few key leaders.

This is by no means a revolutionary training technique, but it has helped one company build esprit de corps by allowing the riflemen to learn from living history and to prepare for combat through the lessons they learned.

Our retired warriors are key assets that we must use in peacetime, because one lesson learned today may save a soldier's life tomorrow.

RICHARD THOMAS  
CPT, Infantry  
Co. D, 1st Battalion,  
502d Infantry  
Fort Campbell, Kentucky

#### MAP COURSE

Reference the article by Major Charles F. Coffin III entitled "Map Course Distances" (INFANTRY, July-August 1989, pages 12-15), I couldn't believe what I was reading. Everything was fine until the author stated, "Using a pocket calculator multiply...and you should see 2745.906044...."

I can just visualize some young infantryman, up to his armpits in mud, saying, "Hang on Sarge, I'll check the distance by calculating the square root of the first two legs and obtaining the hypotenuse of the third."

We should not confuse our soldiers with complex methods of map reading when simpler ones are available. Each map has a scale on the bottom of it that allows us to get as close in distance as we need to. A piece of paper, a pencil, and a protractor have worked very well for many years. It seems pointless to calculate distances down to five meters if we can't determine what five meters is on the map.

FM 100-5 lists simplicity as one of the Principles of War. When preparing any plan, order, or program, the principle of KISS (keep it simple, soldier) should always be employed.

RUSSELL A. GALLAGHER  
MAJ  
TRADOC Liaison Officer  
Tactical Doctrine and Arms Directorate  
United Kingdom

*EDITOR'S NOTE: We must point out that Major Coffin presented this technique primarily for use in setting up an accurate map course on which to check "the knowledge soldiers have gained in the classroom" and to build their confidence, or for use in other situations where there is a "need to know the precise distance between two points."*

#### WEST POINT ASSIGNMENTS

The Department of Social Sciences at the United States Military Academy is looking for highly qualified company-grade ROTC and OCS officers from Basic Year Groups 1982 to 1989 who are interested now or who may have a future

We welcome letters from our readers and print as many of them as we can. Sometimes it takes a while before we find room. But keep writing on topics of interest to our readers, and we'll do our best to publish your comments, sooner or later. All letters are subject to editing to fit space and other editorial considerations.

interest in civilian graduate study followed by a teaching assignment at West Point.

The Department of Social Sciences educates cadets in the academic disciplines of political science (U.S. and international), economics, and management.

The Department's exceptionally competitive selection process requires that officers express their interest early and begin the application process. Now under consideration, for example, are the applications of officers who may be available to start graduate study in the summer of 1991 or later.

Officers available for the 1991 group must complete their applications, including reports of GRE or GMAT scores, not later than 31 March 1990.

Selection criteria include branch qualification before beginning graduate school, demonstration of strong long-term military potential, and undergraduate or graduate records that indicate the officer's ability to gain admission to a top university and successfully complete graduate study.

For more information, please write to the Department of Social Sciences; U.S. Military Academy; ATTN: Captain William K. Sutey, West Point, NY 10996.

W.K. SUTEY  
CPT, Infantry  
Assistant Professor and  
Assistant Personnel Officer

#### BOOK ON 22d INFANTRY

I am working on the second volume of a history of the 22d Infantry Regiment and would like to hear from current or former members of that regiment.

Please write to me at P.O. Box 1145, Roanoke, VA 24006, or call me at (703) 342-3222.

BUD FEUER

#### ROA SCHOLARSHIPS

The Reserve Officers Association (ROA) of the United States will award

100 college scholarships worth up to \$500 each for the 1990-91 academic year.

Seventy-five of these will be undergraduate scholarships to members, or children or grandchildren of members, of the ROA or ROA Ladies Clubs. Children under 21 years of age of deceased but paid members are also eligible. The 25 graduate fellowships will be awarded only to members of the ROA.

A six-member committee screens the applications and selects the winners.

Applications for the 1990-91 academic year are now available to anyone who is interested from ROA Scholarships, 1 Constitution Avenue, N.E., Washington, DC 20002; telephone 202-479-2200. Completed applications must reach the committee no later than 30 April 1990.

Undergraduate applicants must be attending, or must have been accepted to attend, full-time undergraduate studies at a regionally accredited college or university. Because of the minimum tuition fees involved, students attending community colleges will not be considered.

ROA scholarships are made possible by the voluntary donations of ROA members to the endowment fund.

HERBERT M. HART

## ARTICLES ON KOREAN WAR

Garland Publishing, Inc., of New York, publishers of a compact Korean War encyclopedia, is seeking people to contribute articles ranging from 50 to 5,000 words on the various aspects of that conflict.

The solicited articles include military engagements and air operations, weapons and technology, diplomacy, personnel, psychological operations, armistice negotiations, and the like.

Potential contributors should contact me at 507 S. 5th Street, Spring Lake, NC 28390. I am also Command Historian,

U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

STANLEY SANDLER

## KOREAN WAR MUSEUM

The War Memorial Service-Korea was founded in January 1989. One of its major tasks is to establish a consolidated national war museum to be built in Seoul.

This effort is not only the concern of the Korean people but also of those who participated in the Korean War under the United Nations banner and also the freedom and peace loving allied nations throughout the world. Consequently, the successful accomplishment of this undertaking demands active interest, support, and cooperation of all the individuals and organizations directly or indirectly related to the Korean War.

We will appreciate any suggestions for the exhibition and any materials related to the Korean War that the United States and its military organizations may have available.

Anyone who would like to help us in this effort may write directly to me at The War Memorial Service-Korea, #8 Yong San Dong 1 Ka, Yong San Koo, Seoul, Korea. 140-021, or to the office of the Defence Attache in the Republic of Korea Embassy in Washington, D.C.

BYUNG HYUNG LEE  
Lieutenant General, Retired  
President

## PHOTOGRAPHS NEEDED

The Command and Staff Department, U.S. Army Armor School, is establishing a photographic display of current armor battalion/cavalry squadron and heavy brigade/cavalry regiment commanders.

We need current 8x10 color photo-

graphs of the infantry colonels, in Class A uniform, who command heavy brigades with at least one armor battalion assigned.

Photographs should be sent to Professional Development Division, USA-ARMS, ATTN: ATSB-CS-PDD-T, Fort Knox, KY 40121-5211.

A.W. KREMER, JR.  
COL, U.S. Army  
Fort Knox, Kentucky

## BOOK ON RECONDO

I am trying to gather some historical information about RECONDO training for a book, especially the schools at Fort Campbell, Fort Bragg, and West Point and in Vietnam.

Anyone who has such information or who knows a former student or cadre member at these schools may write to me at 2379 N.E. Loop 410, San Antonio, TX 78217; or call 512-657-2820.

E.J. SCALES

## MILITARY HISTORY SYMPOSIUM

The Department of History of the U.S. Air Force Academy will sponsor the Fourteenth Military History Symposium 17-19 October 1990.

The symposium, entitled "Vietnam, 1964-1973: An American Dilemma," will examine the disparate nature of the United States' combat involvement in Vietnam, focusing on the resulting "dilemmas" during the Johnson and Nixon presidencies.

For more information, anyone who is interested may write or call me at the Department of History, USAF Academy, CO 80840-5701; telephone 719-472-3232.

SCOTT ELDER  
Captain, U.S. Air Force

